

February 27, 2007

Testimony of Rich Robinson, Michigan Campaign Finance Network, to the House Ethics  
and Elections Committee on House Bill No. 4313

Chairman Corriveau and Distinguished Members of the Committee,

I am grateful that you are taking up the issue of the revolving door between government service and the industries that interact with government. I have a few comments I'd like to offer on House Bill 4313.

The core of the bill as it is written is to prohibit public officials from engaging in paid lobbying for one year after they leave office. I have some reservation in that I believe the issue is being cast too narrowly. For example, while the bill would prohibit an executive department director from going directly into lobbying, would it prohibit a governor's chief of staff? Or should it prohibit key legislative staff persons from going directly into lobbying? And would it cover lobbying-related activity? For example, would it prohibit a legislator-turned-lobbyist from recruiting clients and planning and directing a lobbying campaign, or is the prohibition confined to direct contact with lobbyable officials? I encourage you to think broadly about who is covered and the activities that are prohibited.

I encourage you to consider a provision specifically to prohibit government officials from negotiating future employment with private businesses that are affected by their official actions. I believe this is particularly important in the era of term limits.

Finally, I hope you'll also consider the revolving door from industry into government service. I encourage you to consider a provision that would require former executives and lobbyists who enter government service to recuse themselves from actions that affect their former employer for a year.

Thank you for your consideration of these points.